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My take on zynga and cpa offers

Michael Arrington posted over the weekend about CPA offers within social games and questioned why facebook, myspace, zynga and others would expose these to our users. He raises good points about 'scammy' advertisers and the bad user experience they create. I agree with him and others that some of these offers misrepresent and hurt our industry.

It has been my mission at zynga to create a sustainable consumer service with long term value to our users and partners. Social gaming is emerging quickly and requiring new rules of engagement from host networks to user payments and advertising forms.

So why does zynga offer these ads?

Most of these offers are good for the advertiser and user. There are many users who don't have access to online payment methods who are still interested in making in game purchases. There is also great potential for large web players like amzn, ebay and netflix to leverage social media channels like facebook and zynga to acquire new user relationships. Sponsoring a white tiger or pink tractor may accelerate these customer acquisition campaigns.

The offer industry is still just getting started and this category of advertising makes up a small minority of our revenue, the bulk of which comes from users directly purchasing virtual goods.

We have worked hard to police and remove bad offers. In fact, the worst offender, tatto media, referenced in the techcrunch article, had already been taken down and permanently banned prior to the post. Nevertheless, we need to be more aggressive and have revised our service level agreements with these providers requiring them to filter and police offers prior to posting on their networks. We have also removed all mobile ads until we see any that offer clear user value.

At zynga, we have faced a similar challenge in providing customer support to millions of users of our free games. Six months ago we were overwhelmed with our ticket volumes and faced an F rating with the better business bureau. We made massive efforts to address this, getting our maximum response times for live email and phone support down to 72 hours and raised our rating to a B+. Even today we realize our customer support isn't at the level our users expect and we continue to work on it.

Similarly, we are working to improve the quality of the CPA offers exposed to our users and evolving our policies and practices to ensure that zynga is worthy of our users' trust

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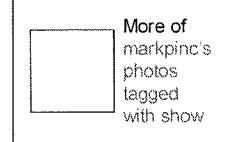
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